

Beyond all debate, editor Paul Copan and Baker Books are to be commended for publishing this dialogue and the attending responses. This was a rare and extraordinary confrontation between the two principal schools of NT interpretation: the conservative versus the liberal, the literalist versus the figurative, the traditional versus the revisionist, the evidentialist versus the fideist. Obviously, there are many more shades of color than this in today's theological spectrum, but these are the principal polarities.

It almost seems as if Crossan and the liberal commentators tried to come halfway in this encounter, while Craig and his defenders conceded very little. Was this generosity on the liberal side? Inflexibility on the part of the conservatives? Or, as some might argue, the testimony of truth?

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Douglass, Herbert E. *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998. 586 pp. Hardcover \$29.95.

Herbert Douglass, lifelong student of the writings of Ellen White, during his professional career taught religion at Pacific Union College and Atlantic Union College, and also served as academic dean and president at the latter before becoming associate editor of the *Adventist Review* and later book editor at Pacific Press. He earned a Th.D. at the Pacific School of Religion and has authored a number of books. His last post before retirement was as president of Weimar College.

In 1955, T. H. Jemison authored the first comprehensive study of the life and work of Ellen G. White, *A Prophet Among You*, and it has served as the standard Seventh-day Adventist college textbook for the last forty-three years. However, an expanded and updated replacement was long overdue, and the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate, along with the General Conference Department of Education and the Board of Higher Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, asked Douglass to prepare it. The result, *Messenger of the Lord*, is nearly encyclopedic. Douglass organized the forty-seven chapters of the nearly six-hundred-page book into five sections: "God's Communication System," "The Real Ellen White," "Messenger to the Church," "How to Listen to the Messenger," and "Continuing Relevancy of the Messenger."

After presenting an overview of how God has communicated with his messengers throughout history (chaps. 1-3), Douglass intentionally includes nine chapters introducing the reader to Ellen White as a person before dealing with her as a prophet. The information is rich with little-known information and insights, and helps us to see Ellen White as human, vulnerable, and fallible—devoted to her husband and her children while at the same time driven by an urgency to be a faithful "messenger of God."

Over one-third of the book (nearly 240 pages) introduces us to her as that "messenger"—tracing her reception of the messages, their content, and the theological, doctrinal, and organizational impact they had on the developing church. Her influence in molding denominational thinking and action toward health and education receive particular emphasis.

Of especially significant importance—in the light of the recent decades of

controversy surrounding her role as prophet, use of sources, degrees of inspiration, etc.—is the last third of the book. It deals extensively with the hermeneutics needed to evaluate her writings (and more ably to deal with the questions, doubts, and problems that have arisen) and also to enable the reader to draw from them principles of relevance for contemporary life and thinking. The final section of the volume includes thirty-three pages of specialized appendices covering a broad range of topics.

Douglass includes a wealth of primary source material, much of it to be found in the endnotes. To the reader desirous of digging deeper, the endnotes must prove a constant source of frustration. The numbers used in the text are minuscule and would have been better printed in bold. If only the endnotes were footnotes, the reader would be more easily enticed to read them. This is a significant weakness, because the endnotes are unusually rich and enlightening. The author may well have had no choice in the formatting of the contents, but in a revision a change would significantly enhance the accessibility of that valuable material.

It is difficult to understand why in the section covering the political, social, and religious context of the early years of Ellen White's life, almost nothing is included on William Miller and the Millerite movement. Jemison in his much smaller book devoted two invaluable chapters to historical and religious background. In addition, when one comes to the section covering Ellen White's family tree, the date and location of her birth are inexplicably omitted, while Jemison succinctly covered the basics.

It seems somewhat surprising that the author, though a longtime educator, dedicates sixty-five pages to health and related topics, while the topic of education is covered in one-third the space. While the appendices are significant and useful, a complete list of her 128 books needs to be included (there isn't even a partial list), and the chart of the development of her books that has graced the inner covers of the Jemison book for forty-three years would certainly enhance the reader's knowledge of her literary themes and their timing.

In the bibliography (which in general is reasonably inclusive), Canright, a staunch critic of Ellen White, is included, while works by Rea and Ford are not. Also, since many valuable doctoral dissertations have been written on a host of Ellen-White-related topics in recent decades, it seems that it would enhance the value of the book to include at least a selected cross-section of them.

Douglass's book is apologetic in orientation and is an able defense of Ellen White, with recurring affirmations of his personal commitment. The book is already proving to be of great value in the college classroom setting and has elicited positive responses from students who are using it as a textbook. While it is too much textbook for one course, it is very usable for a two-quarter course. Reading the supplementary trilogy on Ellen White by George Knight, especially *The World of Ellen White*, the serious student will be broadly informed and will have much of the necessary information to come to a faith-affirming conclusion regarding the life, work, and writings of Ellen White.

Douglass's *Messenger of the Lord* will find a wide and enthusiastic readership among students, pastors, teachers, and informed laymen alike, and will prove of immense value to all of these.